



Chlamydia

What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted disease caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

Who is at risk for chlamydia?

Any sexually active person can be infected with chlamydia. The greater the number of sex partners, the greater the risk of infection. Since chlamydia also can be spread by oral or anal sex, men who have sex with men are also at risk for infection.

What are the symptoms of chlamydia?

About 75 percent of infected females and about 50 percent of infected males have no signs or symptoms. In females, symptoms may include abnormal vaginal discharge, burning or pain during urination, lower abdominal pain, lower back pain, nausea, fever, pain during intercourse, bleeding between menstrual periods or anal discomfort. In males, symptoms may include discharge from the penis, burning or pain during urination or anal discomfort. If untreated, chlamydial infections can progress to serious reproductive and other health problems with both short-term and long-term consequences.

How soon do symptoms appear?

If symptoms do occur, they usually appear seven to 21 days after exposure.

How is chlamydia spread?

Chlamydia is spread by vaginal, oral or anal sex. Chlamydia also can be passed from an infected mother to her baby during vaginal childbirth.

When and for how long is a person able to spread the disease?

A person can spread the infection as long as he or she is infected and untreated.

How is a person diagnosed?

Laboratory tests are available to diagnose chlamydia. Some can be performed on urine, while others require that a specimen be collected from a site such as the cervix or penis.

What is the treatment?

Chlamydia can be treated and cured with antibiotics. All sex partners should be tested and treated at the same time.

Does past infection make a person immune?

No. A person can be reinfected again and again after treatment.

Should adolescents or others be excluded from school, work or other activities if they have chlamydia?

No. Since chlamydia is transmitted through sexual contact only, exclusion is not necessary.

What can be done to prevent the spread of chlamydia?

The most effective way to reduce the spread of chlamydia is to abstain from sexual contact or to be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and is known to be uninfected. Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can reduce the spread of chlamydia. A latex condom should be used for oral sex on the penis, and a latex barrier should be used for oral sex on the vagina or anus. Additionally, to reduce the spread of infection, the number of sex partners should be limited, and a person should be tested if infection is suspected. Sex partners should be notified, tested and treated immediately if a person is infected.

Additional Information:

Additional information is available at www.ndhealth.gov/disease or by calling the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2180.

This disease is a reportable condition. As mandated by North Dakota law, any incidence of this disease shall be reported to the North Dakota Department of Health.

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